FLATHEAD LAKE AND RIVER FISHERIES CO-MANAGEMENT PLAN
DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT: 2008

January 23, 2009

This Annual Report presents activities completed for 2008 under the Flathead Lake and River Fisheries Co-management Plan. The report follows the strategies in the Co-management Plan and follows the outline of the 2008 annual workplan.

Strategy 1. Fisheries Assessment, Monitoring, and Research

Assessment

Objective: Maintain or update assessment by incorporating most recent information

Tasks: 1) Analyze results of research, monitoring and implementation to verify conclusions and assumptions made in the Plan.

Accomplishments: Agencies completed annual monitoring and research surveys on a suite of indices used to assess status of fish populations. Results of these surveys and the Plan's management objectives guide managers.

2008 represented the second of the pre-determined checkpoints in the evaluation of our progress under the Plan. In 2006 we completed the Five-year Review, and in that review we estimated the scale of harvest necessary to reduce the lake trout population. We further set two years as the period to reach the goal by the prescribed methods. We assume that we did not meet the lake trout harvest goal in 2008.

Monitoring

Objective: Quantify harvest and angler pressure

Tasks: 1) Continue ongoing lake-wide creel survey by conducting random aerial angler counts and daily angler interviews

Accomplishments: *We conducted the annual survey again this year, but modified the method of analysis based on complications presented by the Mack Days contests. Harvest estimates were partitioned between the Mack Days periods and non-Mack Days periods so that two estimates were generated that summed to the annual total harvest. CSKT has estimated that anglers harvested 44,476 lake trout in 2008, which is substantially less than the target of 60,000.*

Objective: Quantify fish population status

Tasks: 1) Estimates long-term trends in abundance by continuing spring gillnetting.

Accomplishments: Completed lake-wide annual spring gillnetting survey of Flathead Lake comprised of both floating and sinking standard experimental nets set in designated areas. Catch per unit effort and species composition of the 2008 catch were very similar to catches in recent years with the exception that total numbers of fish caught were low. Lake whitefish and lake trout dominated the sinking net catch, while peamouth chub, northern pikeminnow and westslope cutthroat trout dominated the floating net catch.

Results support conclusions of the Five Year Review that the fish community in Flathead Lake has stabilized in recent years.

2) Estimate size structure, maturity, and mortality rates by placing 48 gillnets throughout Flathead Lake during October and November

<u>Accomplishments</u>: *We expanded our effort in 2008 to 1.5 times the standard or a total of 72 gillnets set lakewide.* We captured 778 lake trout and determined the mortality rate to be 0.28. This rate has shown very little variation over the period of the plan.

3) Estimate juvenile populations of bull trout and cutthroat trout in twelve spawning streams

<u>Accomplishments:</u> *Crews completed juvenile population estimates in annual index streams. Bull trout estimates showed densities similar to those of recent years. Subsequently, the mean composite density for juvenile bull trout in index streams was similar to recent years. Crews electrofished 26 streams, completing population estimates of juvenile trout populations.*

4) Conduct bull trout redd counts in all known spawning streams in the basin

<u>Accomplishments:</u> *Crews completed a basin-wide survey of all known bull trout spawning streams in tributaries to the North and Middle forks. We have annually conducted surveys since 1980; the 2008 survey was the 29th year of counts and the tenth basin-wide count. We counted 503 redds, half in each drainage. Redds were observed in all spawning streams, with the exception of Cabin Creek in British Columbia, which in past surveys always had three or less redds. Counts in the eight stream index reaches, which are counted annually, totaled 225 (45% of the basin total). The 225 total is 34% above the post-Mysis average of 168 redds and the third highest in the past 17 years. It is 59% of the pre-Mysis average of 384 redds. Results support conclusions of the Five Year Review that the fish community in Flathead Lake has stabilized in recent years.*

6) Measure growth rates of lake trout by analyzing otoliths collected in October and November, and develop a population growth curve

<u>Accomplishments:</u> *We collected over 300 otoliths during 2008 for the ongoing analysis of lake trout growth. We do not develop growth curves annually because the process is very labor intensive. The last growth curve was developed from the 2005 data (Figure 1) and serves to describe the current growth rate for the population. We are working on a method to streamline the process that would facilitate an annual estimate of population-level growth rate that would have utility for tracking annual trends in growth. We hope to begin implementing this new method in 2009.*

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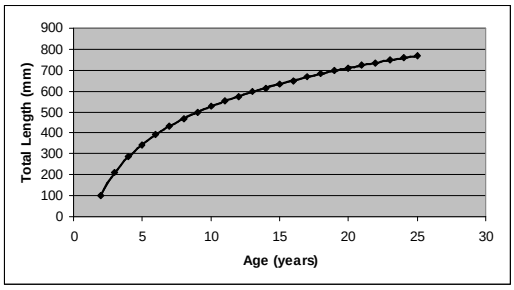

Figure 1. Estimated length at age for lake trout in Flathead Lake, 2005

7) Conduct toxicological analysis on fish tissues in the Flathead and Elk River systems.

Accomplishments: Crews collected tissue samples from various fish species in seven water bodies in both Flathead and Elk River systems. Samples were sent to Energy Labs Inc. for toxicological analysis. Results will be analyzed and reported this winter.

8) Determine species distribution in 25 stream reaches in the British Columbian Flathead River and tributaries.

Accomplishments: Crews surveyed over 25 stream reaches collecting species distribution information and genetic samples in British Columbian tributaries to the North Fork. Westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout and sculpin were observed in many reaches.

9) Estimate the abundance of lake trout in Flathead Lake by means of a mark and recapture estimation procedure.

Accomplishments: We began in 2007 to develop a cost-effective method to estimate the size of the lake trout population in Flathead Lake. Our goal to date has been to increase harvest of lake trout annually as a means to ultimately achieve the reduction in population. Because the population is so large, even with annual increases in harvest it may take an unreasonable period of time to achieve a population reduction. Knowledge of the population size enables us to know the magnitude of harvest that will achieve the reduction.

We chose the mark-recapture method to estimate the population size and began the process in 2007 to mark fish that we captured by angling and by gillnetting. We incorporated the marking process in the ongoing fall gillnetting schedule and also collected fish from anglers during the Fall Mack Days event for marking. Marked fish also served double-duty of providing additional interest in the fishing contests as we awarded from $100 to $500 for recaptured fish with tags. By utilizing the fishing contests we completely eliminated the cost of recapturing fish and were able to generate a recapture sample size that would have been unreasonably expensive to obtain by conventional means.

We used 2007 as a test-year to begin determining tagging survival rates and the feasibility of using fishing contests as the recapture method. In the month prior to the spring fishing contest we captured 78 lake trout by angling and marked and released them. Over the next two months 7,905 lake trout were caught in the contest, all of which were examined for marks, and two were determined to be marked, representing a two percent recapture rate. We did not generate a population estimate from this work because too many assumptions were violated, especially the small number of fish marked. In the summer of 2007 we marked 10 additional lake trout making a total of 86 marked fish at large after deducting the two removed in the spring contest and for simplicity sake assuming zero mortality over the time period. Between September 28th and November 11th five tagged lake trout were identified among the 14,415 lake trout harvested in the fall fishing contest, representing a six percent recapture rate. These sample sizes are also insufficient for valid estimation of population size.

In 2008 we expanded the marking program to generate estimates that would have greater utility for management than those generated in 2007. During winter 2008 we again collected fish by angling and gillnetting and marked 774 lake trout. In the spring event we received 9,910 fish of which 15 were marked, and in the fall we received 10,108 fish of which 23 were marked. While this effort is an improvement over the results from 2007, the recapture rates are still too low for valid population estimates. We will continue to refine this method by incorporating estimates of tagging and natural mortality over the period between tagging and recapture, and by working to increase the number of fish tagged during 2009.

Research

Objective: Quantify competitive interactions between species

Tasks:

1) Relate "relative" population structure estimates collected during fall gillnetting to "absolute" harvest estimates collected year-round by the creel survey.

Accomplishments: We did this work in 2005 and generated a population estimate that was the basis for setting our harvest target of 60,000 lake trout. We are doing further work to refine this estimate by means of alternate methods of estimating population size as discussed above, and with the help of contracted experts in population analysis.

2) Update lake trout tagging database and investigate growth rates and distribution

Accomplishments: We updated the database and plan to analyze it this winter, as time allows. This is an ongoing project.

3) Assess rainbow trout distribution in tributaries and main stem river.

Accomplishments: We continue to assess rainbow trout distribution and spawning locations in the Flathead System. Distribution and genetic makeup has largely been determined in the North Fork tributaries. Recent studies have documented widespread hybridization between rainbow trout and westslope cutthroat trout in the Flathead River Drainage. Studies also indicate that hybridization is spreading among sites and decreasing in an upstream direction from the main stem of the Flathead River, which suggests hybridization is spreading upstream. Rainbow trout hybridization with westslope cutthroat trout is prevalent in tributaries near the Middle Fork confluence and lessens moving upstream. No hybridization has been detected in the northern US tributaries and BC tributaries. We have yet to conduct a comprehensive survey of Middle Fork tributaries.

4) Assess native trout habitat use (IFIM) and migrations in river.

Accomplishments: Crews radio tagged westslope cutthroat trout below Hungry Horse Dam and tracked their movements throughout the year. Tagged fish dispersed widely during the spawning season.

Strategy 2. Water Quality and Aquatic Habitat

Objective: Maintain and improve water quality and substrate condition

Tasks: 1) Administer stream protection acts (310,124, 318), and Tribal Aquatic Lands Conservation Ordinance.

Accomplishments: FWP worked on over 80 Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (310) permits and dozens of Montana Stream Protection Act (124) permits in the Flathead Drainage.

2) Review land management activities.

Accomplishments: FWP commented on USFS and DNRC timber management projects and numerous county and municipal subdivision proposals. FWP participated in development of riparian buffer and setback recommendations for Flathead County and municipality (Whitefish) planning and regulatory efforts.

3) Monitor rearing conditions in ten spawning tributaries using substrate coring and scoring techniques

Accomplishments: Completed substrate coring (30 streams) and scoring (21 streams) in Flathead tributaries. Results are not available at this time.

4) Participate in and contribute to analysis of environmental impacts of coal mining in the British Columbia portion of the Flathead River

Accomplishments: We continue to provide fisheries input to the Canadian regulatory process and collect baseline fisheries information to assess potential impacts from the mining proposal (see sections above).

Objective: Minimize negative influence of Hungry Horse Dam on the river and lake system.

Tasks: 1) Monitor effects of selective withdrawal from Hungry Horse Dam on main-stem river temperatures.

Accomplishments: Currently determining invertebrate species composition and density at sites impacted by dam operations. This is an ongoing study to monitor effects of the dam. Crews are radio tracking westslope cutthroat trout tagged below the dam.

2) Continue work to stabilize river flows downstream of Hungry Horse Dam.

Accomplishments: Continue to recommend management options for operations of Hungry Horse Dam and other downstream hydropower facilities in an effort to recreate a natural hydrograph for the Flathead River. Federal operation agencies are adopting operation strategies proposed by Montana to reduce drawdown of the reservoir water level and provide a more natural flow regime for the Flathead River.

Objective: Improve tributary habitats.

Tasks: 1) Participate in and support multi-agency restoration efforts in Coal Creek.

Accomplishments: FWP completed a habitat restoration project in the Coal Creek headwaters that included reestablishing large wood debris in reaches that were cleared or suffered from past harvest of streamside trees.

2) Assess habitat restoration effort in Hallowat Creek.

Accomplishments: Ongoing project to monitor stream channel and bull trout responses to the habitat restoration project.

Two parcels were approved for purchase that will provide both habitat and some limited public access using funding from the Bonneville Power Administration. A parcel on Hay Creek in the North Fork Flathead protects a section of stream where habitat enhancement has been previously done and is critical in linking upstream spawning habitat with spawning fish from the North Fork. A Foys Bend parcel on the Flathead River about 18 miles upstream from Flathead Lake was approved for purchase to protect riparian habitat and rearing areas for native bull and cutthroat trout, The parcel will provide some controlled public access to the Flathead River.

Strategy 3. Information and Education Activities

Objective: Improve the ability of anglers to identify fish species; focus specifically on distinguishing bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout from other fish species.

Tasks: 1) Continue using the bull trout identification slide series in schools and distribute it widely to public and agency groups.

2) Maintain the bull trout identification tutorial and testing site on FWP's website with links to agency and private websites. Monitor the number of visitors taking the entry test, tutorial, and final test and compare to previous years.

Accomplishments: The bull trout education and identification program on the web continued to be popular. To date over the past 7 years (through January 5, 2009), users completed 14,895 pretests, and 15,793 final tests. taken training, and/or posttest (14,663 tests taken). For the 3,911 users who took the entire battery and training in order, scores on the final test (68.6%) increased significantly above scores on the pretest (57.5%), reflecting the effectiveness of the training module.

In addition to the web site, we used fish identification boards with models of various species of trout and placed them at agency offices sporting goods stores, and special fishing events.

We also continue to distribute a fold out brochure to aid anglers in identifying trout. These have proved to be very popular with anglers because they fit nicely into a front pocket.

Through our Hooked on Fishing Classes, we continue to show a fish identification slide series to hundreds of students.

We held a regional State-Fish Art contest based on the state fish, the cutthroat trout.

Objective: Increase awareness of proper catch and release techniques.

Tasks: 1) Provide catch and release brochures focusing on westslope cutthroat trout to at least 500 anglers contacted by creel clerks on the lake and river

2) Include information on catch and release techniques in the bull trout identification web site.

Accomplishments: Creel clerks distributed informational brochures on catch and release to more than 500 anglers throughout the survey period. Catch and release information is integrated into the web site.

Objective: Inform the public about the fish consumption advisory and associated health risks.

Tasks: 1) Include information on the fish consumption advisory in brochures and distribute it through creel contacts and license agents. Distribute the information to at least 100 high school students at the annual Lake Honoring Day.

2) Include information on the fish consumption advisory in radio reports.

Accomplishments: We included a table and discussion of the advisory in the 2008 Flathead Lake Honoring booklet(more than 200 distributed) and in the Flathead Fishing Guide. Brochures were hand-distributed during creel contacts.

The Flathead Indian Reservation Fishing, Hunting, and Recreation Regulations of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks include Fish Consumption Guidelines and a table with lake trout and lake whitefish meal guidelines. Thousands of regulations were distributed between March 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008.

Objective: Increase harvest of nonnative fish by increasing angler effectiveness

Tasks: 1) Continue to distribute the Flathead fishing brochure. . Distribute at least 500 brochures to anglers and interested persons.

2) Disseminate verbal and written information through creel clerks.

Accomplishments: We promoted the concept of increasing harvest of nonnative fish and encouraging community support through partnerships with area food banks, the Honoring Day, and fishing events. The Mack Days events include extensive radio and television interviews and newspaper interviews that disseminate information on the management strategy. We released joint news releases on the events. Many articles in the newspapers provided updates on the number of fish caught and angler success. We gave interviews to a number of radio news shows regarding these updates.

Objective: Increase public awareness of native species, fisheries management, and issues relating to the protection of Flathead Lake through the use a public lake honoring event and other educational activities.

Tasks: 1) Hold the 8^{h} annual Lake Honoring Day. The event highlights state/tribes cooperation and is a hands-on event for area high school students who will soon be active adult community members. The event is an effective way to explain to the public our co-management strategies.

Accomplishments: The 8th annual Flathead Lake Honoring Day was held on September 23, 2008. The event included about 200 high school students and teachers from around the region. The event was held at Blue Bay fishing access and included a talk by a tribal elder, state and Tribes natural resource program representatives,, and an honor presentation. The Honoring Day also included demonstrations on Flathead Lake aquatic

resources at the Blue Bay site and at the Flathead Lake Biological Station. We produced a high-quality booklet for the event and they were all distributed. Newspaper stories covered the event.

In May, nearly 1,000 fourth and fifth graders from all across the Reservation attended the River Honoring. This two-day outdoor environmental education event provided an opportunity to increase public awareness, education and community involvement in the preservation of natural and cultural resources along the Lower Flathead River. Newspaper coverage included articles in the weekly newspapers and a feature article in the Missoulian.

2) Work with schools on native fish education through the Hooked on Fishing program and other programs. Work with at least 50 classrooms in the Hooked on Fishing program. Arrange for coverage of at least 3 classrooms in the Polson/Ronan areas.

Accomplishments: We are working with more than 70 Hooked on Fishing classrooms region-wide, and we have achieved much better coverage in the Polson/Ronan area in the past year. The new FWP warden in the area is working with the CSKT natural resource staff and enforcement staff to increase participation in the schools, and establish a more structured program. The table below lists the new schools and classrooms:

Hooked on Fishing School	***Teacher***	***Number of Students***	***Grade***
Hotsprings	*Alisa Mullem*	*19*	*4th*
Valley View	*Susie Kaiser*	*13*	*Mixed grade*
Charlo	*Jared Miller*	*22*	*4th*
Pablo	*Ryan*	*46—2 classes*	*4th*
Dixon	*Becky Burg*	*10*	*Mixed grade*
Ronan	*Scott Graham*	*67—3 classes*	*4th*

Objective: Foster public support of and participation in the management strategy of recreational harvest of lake trout to benefit native species.

Tasks: 1) Include information in radio shows featuring the management plan and approach, and encourage anglers to help in the effort. Clearly explain what the original plan called for, and what we've accomplished under the plan. Record 2 radio talk shows on our goals and accomplishments. Include this information whenever possible in other I&E activities.
2) Feature stories on the approach in newsletters and newspapers; use both paid and free advertising.

Accomplishments: The 12-page Flathead Fishing Guide, now in its second printing, contains an explanation of the Co-Management plan objectives, encourages harvest of lake trout, lake whitefish, and perch, and provides contacts for food banks where anglers

can contribute their catch. We also discussed the management approach on a number of radio shows

3) Increase efforts to boost participation in sponsored fishing events through a variety of media and public outreach. To accomplish this end, schedule television coverage, and conduct a paid public service announcement campaign to increase awareness. Run adds on at least three radio stations leading up to the spring and fall events.

Accomplishments: On several radio shows, we promoted the concept of increasing harvest of nonnative fish and encouraging community support through partnerships with area food banks, the Honoring Day, and fishing events. The Mack Days events include extensive radio and television spots and interviews that disseminate information on the management strategy.

FWP ran paid public service announcement campaigns for the spring and fall Mack Days, investing about $1,000 on each campaign. We spent this level of funding to focus these adds in desirable radio play times.

CSKT focused intense outreach efforts on the Mack Days events. Media coverage included TV, radio and print media. TV ads were broadcast on KPAX-TV/KAJ-TV, and an additional TV station in Missoula. Interviews with Fisheries staff were aired, and print media ads appeared in Reservation newspapers. The Missoulian ran feature articles; radio broadcast included hundreds of 30-second ads on KERR and KQRK radio stations

Strategy 4. Lake and River Access

Objective: Increase public access to Flathead Lake and River.

Tasks: 1) Continue to assess current access and availability of public lands along lakeshore.

2) Work towards a comprehensive access plan and implement access improvements.

3) Widely distribute an access guide to Flathead Lake and River.

4) Work with Lake County to develop the Regatta Grounds for public boat launching.

Accomplishments: We continue to discuss this subject with the Lake County commissioners. In 2008 the boat ramp was reconstructed by Lake County and shoreline stabilization work was completed. We are optimistic that approval from the commissioners is forthcoming to develop the site for public use and we will continue to work with the commissioners to achieve this objective.

A 160 acre parcel was purchased on the north shore of Flathead Lake under the Montana Legacy Project and other funding sources. About 25 acres will be managed as a state park and provide access, the remaining acres will be a wildlife management area. During summer months conducted aerial counts of boat numbers on the lower Flathead River and associated sloughs. When comparing 2008 counts to boat counts in 2002 and 1992, boating use has increased over time in both the river and sloughs. In some months,

boating increased by two to three times the levels observed in 2002 and four to five times the levels observed in 1992.

Strategy 5. Fish Population Management

Background: The following objectives describe a comprehensive approach to reverse the impact of introduced fish on native fish. The first three objectives address the commitments we made in the Midterm Review and in the Response to Public Comments on the review. The first objective outlines our methods to measurably increase angler harvest of lake trout. The second and third objectives outline how we will prepare to implement further actions should the combination of fishing events and higher harvest limits not achieve our targets. Presentations related to the need for and the appropriate method to implement will be made during our annual reporting cycles.

Objective: Increase native species by progressively increasing angler harvest to 60,000 lake trout annually by end of 2008. In 2007, increase angler harvest to 50,000 lake trout.

Tasks: 1) Conduct a spring and a fall fishing contest with increased promotion and prize structure

Accomplishments: We conducted both the spring and fall events in 2008 with prizes of roughly $40,000 in each event, or an increase of roughly $10,000 per event from the 2007 level. There was also extensive radio, TV and newspaper coverage of the events.

2) Estimate overall harvest patterns and contribution from fishing events

Accomplishments: Harvest by the general angling public has been relatively constant over the last several years. Harvest in the contests grew rapidly until 2008 and is currently approaching a level roughly comparable to the general harvest. The angler-days invested are far greater in the general recreational season, but the equalizer is the fact that the harvest rate during the contests is far greater than during the general season. We are unable to determine exactly the degree to which the contests add to the total harvest because of some behavioral changes caused by the contests. For example, we know from interviewing anglers that many anglers fish less often during non-contest periods than in the past because they spend so many days fishing the contests.

3) Estimate annual growth of fishing events and project future potential

Accomplishments: Harvest of lake trout in the contests increased at an annual rate of roughly 100% from 2002 to 2007 (Figure 2). There was a fall back in harvest in 2008 that may indicate that the peak potential of the contests has been reached. We have consistently solicited suggestions from the participating anglers for ways to enlarge the contests. In 2007 we held a special meeting with the anglers to receive detailed input. We have implemented all practical suggestions that we received. Many of the changes we have made appear to have contributed to the growth in the contests, but we think that we have largely exhausted the possibilities for additional changes and growth.

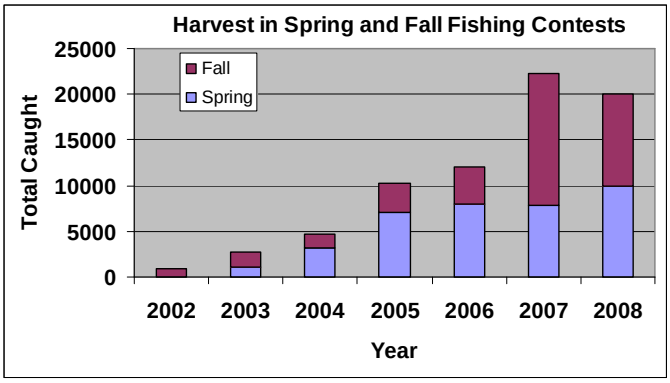

Figure 2. Total harvest in spring and fall fishing contests, 2002 to 2008.

4) Develop educational video on lake trout fishing techniques

Accomplishments: We have not made significant progress on this task but still consider it to be a worthwhile objective.

5) Work with the MacAttack to better account for harvest and meet management goals

Accomplishments: FWP staff worked the fish station, measuring and counting fish turned in by anglers and handing out the lottery tickets. In the one and a half day event, anglers harvested 703 lake trout, just over half of these were less than 22 inches in length.

Objective: Begin preparation to implement additional methods of lake trout reduction outlined in the Co-management Plan.

Tasks: 1) Develop ideas for a rewards program structure that would further encourage harvest of lake trout

Accomplishments: This task was evaluated exhaustively in the context of all other ideas to achieve the established target level of lake trout removal. Ideas included fish drop off points, fishing access collection points, and roving boat pick request by cell phone and marine radio. Fish would have to be processed and distributed to the same outlets that we currently used for Mack Days events. The CSKT predicted that these methods would not generate sufficient harvest to achieve the target level.

2) Outline the process and timeline that is required to establish a rewards program, including legislative and public processes.

Accomplishments: The CSKT have determined that this would simply require Tribal Council approval and no regulation changes provided standard bag limits were not exceeded. This administrative timeline for the State of Montana is dependent on changes by the State Legislature. Any capture of lake trout for profit, whether through bounty or commercial sale, would require a change in state statutes. There are statutes specific to sale of whitefish and paddlefish roe in place now. The extent of public process would be dependant upon the details of implementation. Most of the ideas developed related to a rewards program were closely related to and could be considered an expansion of the current Mack Days Events. Therefore, little formal public process would be necessary. However, the actual public process would be determined based on a detailed proposal and with Joint Board input.

3) Initiate pro-active steps in 2008 to ensure successful implementation of actions identified in the process of adaptive management. That is, should annual harvest targets prove unattainable, have the prerequisite steps completed for implementing the next logical method of lake trout population reduction immediately as deemed necessary.

Accomplishments: The shortfall in reaching our target lake trout removal (see task 3 above) was about 20% or about 10,000 fish. If we have reached the peak potential harvest of 20,000 lake trout in the Mack Days events (see Task 3 in previous Objective), then we feel that our ability to produce significantly more lake trout harvest with the Mack Days type contests is limited.

Objective: Reduce potential for hybridization and competition with non-native fish.

Tasks: 1) Assess ability of the barriers in Abbot Creek and other rainbow spawning streams to minimize rainbow trout opportunity to spawn and hybridize with cutthroat trout.

Accomplishments: FWP continues to suppress the Abbot Creek trout population and assess use by rainbow and hybrid trout in streams near the confluence of the North and Middle forks. The upper barrier on Abbot Creek is preventing rainbow trout from spawning above the highway crossing. The lower barrier at the creek mouth has been breeched during high flow events. FWP continues to develop the lower barrier and transport spawning rainbows to an urban fishing pond. Radio-telemetry studies continue to address rainbow and hybrid trout movements and determine locations of spawning habitat. See above sections regarding this Objective.

2) Determine distribution of hybridization in the upper river system

Accomplishments: FWP continues to assess distribution of hybrid fish and their spawning locations in the system. Genetic surveys have been conducted in most North Fork tributaries (see above sections). The majority of Middle Fork tributaries have not been surveyed at this time.

Objective: Remove non-native species from Flathead tributaries where practical.

Tasks: 1) Remove brown trout from Mill Creek by electrofishing and destroying redds to stop recruitment

Accomplishments: Surveys were not conducted this fall.

2) Remove brook trout from Skidoo Creek by electrofishing and destroying redds to stop recruitment

Accomplishments: During 2008 we completed construction of a barrier near the mouth of Skidoo Creek to prevent the passage of brook trout from Flathead Lake into the stream. This work was a necessary prerequisite to the treatment step because it ensures that there is no chance for re-invasion after the brook trout have been removed.

3) Prepare an Environmental Assessment to facilitate the use of piscicides on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Accomplishments: We began this process and have set a schedule to have an assessment completed by mid-July 2009.

Develop Reports
Reduce and analyze monitoring data; complete and present the annual report to the Flathead Reservation Fish and Wildlife Board
Report for FERC ESA compliance
FWIS Annual Work Report